THE ADVENTURE OF THE SOLITARY CYCLIST.

ening of the side of the sole caused by the friction of the edge of the pedal. "Yes, I bicycle a good deal. Mr. Holmes, and that has something to do

complexion.

curious statement:-

was this interview?'

he suggested that I should go home to

her every week end, and he offered me a hundred a year, which was certainly splendid pay. So it ended by my ac-cepting, and I went down to Chiltern

Grange, about six miles from Farnham. Mr. Carruthers was a widower, but he had engaged a lady housekeeper, a

very respectable, elderly person, called Mrs. Dixon, to look after his establishment. The child was a dear, and everything promised well. Mr. Carruthers was very kind and very musi-

cal, and we had most pleasant even-ings together. Every week end I went

home to my mother in town.

BY SIR A. CONAN DOYLE.



Miss Violet Smith, Teacher of Music.

"The first flaw in my happiness was the arrival of the red-moustached Mr. Woodley. He came for a visit of a week, and oh! it seemed three months to me. He was a dreadful person—a bully to everyone else, but to me something infinitely worse. He made odlous love to me, boasted of his wealth, said that if I married him I could have the finest diamonds in London, and finally when I would have nothing to do with him, he seized me in his arms one day after dinner—he was with my visit to you today."
My friend took the lady's ungloved hand, and examined it with as close an attention and as little sentiment as a attention and as little sentiment as a scientist would show to a specimen.

"You will excuse me, I am sure. It is my business," said he, as he dropped it. "I nearly fell into the error of supposing that you were typewriting. Of course, it is obvious that it is music. You observe the spatulate finger-ends, Watson, which is common to both professions? There is a spirituality about the feet however." his arms one day after dinner—he was hideously strong—and swore that he would not let me go until I kissed him. Mr. Carruthers came in and tore him fessions? There is a spirituality about the face, however"—she gently turned it towards the light—"which the typefessions? There is a spirituality about the face, however"—she gently turned it towards the light—"which the type-writer does not generate. This lady is a musician."

"Yes, Mr. Holmes, I teach music."

"In the country, I presume, from "In the country, I presume, from exposed to such an insult again. have not seen Mr. Woodley since.

exposed to such an insult again. have not seen Mr. Woodley since.

"And now, Mr. Holmes, I come at last to the special thing which has caused me to ask your advice today. You must know that every Saturday forenoon I ride on my bicycle to Farnham station, in order to get the 12:22 to town. The road from Chiltern Grange is a lonely one, and at one spot it is particularly so, for it lies for over a mile between Charlington Heath upon one side and the woods which lie round Charlington hall upon the other. You could not find a more lonely tract of road anywhere, and it is quite rare to meet so much as a cart, or a peasant, until you reach the high road near Crooksbury hill. Two weeks ago I was passing this place, when I chanced to look back over my shoulder, and about 200 yards behind the transport of the city two three times a week. He is deeply one a highly left to do. But he goes into the city two three times a week. He is deeply "Yes, sir, near Farnham, on the borders of Surrey." 'A beautiful neighborhood, and full of the most interesting associations. You remember, Watson, that it was near there that we took Archie Stamford, the forger. Now, Miss Violet, what has happened to you, near Farnham, on the borders of Surrey?"

The young lady with great charners. The young lady, with great clearness and composure, made the following "My father is dead, Mr. Holmes. He was James Smith, who conducted the orchestra at the old Imperial theatre. My mother and I were left without a relation in the world except one uncle, Smith who went to Africa twenty-five years ago, and we have never had a word from himsince. When when I chanced to look back over my shoulder, and about 200 yards behind me I saw a man, also on a bicycle. He seemed to be a middle-aged man, with a short, dark beard. I looked back before I reached Farnham, but the man was gone, so I thought no more about it. But you can imagine how surprised I was, Mr. Holmes, when, on my return on the Monday. I saw the same man on the same stretch of road. My astonishment was increased when the incident occurred again, exactly as before, on the following Saturday and father died, we were left very poor but one day we were told that there was an advertisement in the Times, inquiring for our whereabouts. You can imagine how excited we were, for thought that some one had left us a fortune. We went at once to the lawyer whose name was given in the There we met two gentlemen, Carruthers and Mr. Woodley, who re home on a visit from South rica. They said that my uncle was a incident occurred again, exactly as before, on the following Saturday and Monday. He always kept his distance and did not molest me in any way, but still it was very odd. I mentioned it to Mr. Carruthers, who seemed interested in what I said, and told me that he had ordered a horse and trap, so that its fitting I should not pass over these Africa. They said that he had died some months before in great poverty in Johannesburg, and that he had asked them with his last breath to hunt up them with his last breath to hunt up his relations, and see that they were in no want. It seemed strange to us that Uncle Ralph, who took no notice of us when he was alive, should be so careful to look after us when he was dead, but Mr. Carruthers explained that the reason was that my uncle had just heard of the death of his brother, and so fall recreases the foregree the forest transfer or the recrease the foregree that the reason was that my uncle had just heard of the death of his brother, and so fall recreases the foregree that the reason was that my uncle had just heard of the death of his brother. in future I should not pass over these lonely roads without some companion.

in future I should not pass over these lonely roads without some companion.

"The horse and trap were to have come this week, but for some reason they were not delivered, and again I had to cycle to the station. That was this morning. You can think that I looked out when I came to Charlington Heath, and there, sure enough, was the man, exactly as he had been the two weeks before. He always kept so far from me that I could not clearly see his face, but it was certainly someone whom I did not know. He was dressed in a dark suit with a cloth cap. The only thing about his face that I could clearly see was his dark beard. Today I was not alarmed, but I was filled with curiosity, and I determined to find out who he was and what he wanted. I slowed down his. Then I stopped altogether, but he stopped also. Then I laid a trap for him. There is a 'sharp turning of the road, and I pedalled very quickly round this, and then I stopped and waited. I expected him to shoot round and pass me before he could stop. But he never appeared. Then I went back and looked round the corner. I could see a mile of road, but he not on it. To make it the more extraordinary, there was no side road, but he not on it. To make it the more extraordinary, there was no side road at this oint down which he could have and so felt responsible for our fate."
"Excuse me," said Holmes, "When Last December—four months ago."
'Pray proceed." "Mr. Woodley seemed to me to be a most odious person. He was forever making eyes at me—a coarse, puffy-faced, red-moustached young man, with his hair plastered down on each side of his forehead. I thought that he was perfectly hateful—and I was sure that Cyril would not wish me to know ch a person."
Oh, Cyril is his name!" said Holmes, miling.

The young lady blushed and laughed.

"Yes, Mr. Holmes, Cyril Morton, an electrical engineer, and we hope to be married at the end of the summer. Dear me, how did I get talking about him? What I wished to say was that Mr. Woodley was perfectly odious, but that Mr. Carruthers, who was a much older man, was more agreeable. He was a dark, sallow, clean-shaven, silent person, but he had polite manners and a pleasant smile. He inquired how we were left, and on finding that we were very poor he suggested that I should but he not on it. To make it the more our solution.

Extraordinary, there was no side road at this oint down which he could have at this oint down which he could have that she went down upon the Monday by the train which leaves Water-day by the t very poor, he suggested that I should

come and teach music to his only daughter, aged ten. I said that I did not like to leave my mother, on which turning the road and your discovery that the road was clear?"

"The first flaw in my happiness was | as I understand, is situated in its own

ou are engaged?" he asked at last.
"He is in the Midland Electrical ompany, at Coventry." "He would not pay you a surprise

"Oh, Mr. Holmes! As if I should not know him!"
"Have you had any other admirers?"

"Several before I knew Cyril." "And since?" Woodley, if you can call him an ad-

mirer.

Our fair client seemed a little con "Who was he?" asked Mr. Holmes.

"Oh, it may be a mere fancy of mine; but it had seemed to me sometimes that my employer, Mr. Carruthers, We are thrown rather together. I play his accompaniments in the evening He fect gentleman. But a girl always

'Ha!" Holmes looked grave. "What

"Well, at least he is fairly well-to But he goes into the city two or three times a week. He is deeply interested in South African gold shares."
"You will let me know any fresh development, Miss Smith. I am very busy just now, but I will find time to make some inquiries into your case. Good-bye, and I trust that we shall have nothing but good news from My you."
the "It is part of the settled order of

nature that such a girl should have followers," said Holmes, as he pulled at his meditative pipe, "but for choice not on bicycles in lonely country roads, Some secretive lover, beyond all doubt. But there are curious and suggestive details about the case, Watson."
"That he should appear only at that

day by the train which leaves Waterloo at 3:50, so I started early and
caught the 9:13. At Farnham station
I had no difficulty in being directed
to Charlington Heath. It was impossible to mistake the scene of the that the road was clear?"

"Two or three minutes."

"Then he could not have retreated down the road, and you say that there are no side roads?"

"None."

"Then he could not have retreated down the road, and you say that there are no side roads?"

"None."

"Then he could not have retreated down the road, and you say that there are no side roads?"

"None."

"Then he could not have retreated down the road, and you say that there are no side roads?"

"None."

"Then he could not have retreated down the road, and you say that there will be the scene of the young lady's adventure, for the road in the good old British sport of boxing. Occasionally, it is of service; today, other, surrounding a park which is studded with magnificent trees. There was a main gateway of ligher studged."

It begged him to tell me what had oc-"Then he certainly took a footpath stone, each side pillar surmounted by mouldering heraldic emblems, but be-"Then he certainly took a lootpath on one side or the other."

"It could not have been on the side of the heath, or I should have seen him."

"So, by the process of exclusion, we arrive at the fact that he made his way toward Charlington hall, which,

he sprang from his machine and led it through a gap in the hedge, disap-pearing from my view.

A quarter of an hour passed, and a second cyclist appeared. This time it was the young lady coming from the was the young lady coming from the station. I saw her look about her as she came to the Charlington hedge. An instant later the man emerged from his hiding place, sprang upon his from his hiding place, sprang upon his cycle, and followed her. In all the broad landscape those were the only moving figures, the graceful girl sitting very straight upon her machine, and the man behind her bending low over his handle-bar with a curiously furtive suggestion in every movement. She looked back at him and slowed her pace. He slowed also. She stopped. He at once stopped, too, keeping two hundred yards behind her. Her next movement was as unexpected as it was spirited. She suddenly whisked her wheels round and dashed straight at He was as quick as she, ever, and darted off in desperate flight. Presently she came back up the road again, her head haughtily in the air. not deigning to take any further notice of her silent attendant. He had turned also, and still kept his distance until the curve of the road hid them from my sight.

I remained in my hiding place, and it was well that I did so, for presently the man reappeared, cycling slowly back. He turned in at the hall gates, and dismounted from his machine. For some minutes I could see him standing among the trees. His hands were raised, and he seemed to be settling his necktie. Then he mounted his cycle, and rode away from me down the drive toward the hall. I ran across the heath and peered through the trees. Far away I could catch glimpses of the old grey building with its bristling Tudor chimneys, but the drive ran through dense shrubbery, and I saw no more

had done a fairly good morning's work and I walked back in high spirits to Farnham. The local house agent could tell me nothing about Charlington hall, and referred me to a well known firm in Pall Mall. There I halted on my way home, and met with courtesy from the representative. No, I could not have Charlington hall for the summer. I was just too late. It had been let about a month ago. Mr. Williamson was the name of the tenant. He was a respectable, elderly gentleman. The polite agent was afraid he could say no more, as the affairs of his clients were not matters which he could dis-

should have valued. On the contrary, his austere face was even more severe than usual as he commented upon the things that I had done and the things

or what he wanted, was as obscure as one hundreds of yards away, and can tell me even less than Miss Smith. She tell me even less than Miss Smith. She thinks she does not know the man; I am convinced she does. Why, otherwise, should he be so desperately anxious that she should not get so near him as to see his features? You describe him as bending over the handlebar. Concealment again, you see. You a glorious morning, and the heath-cov-really have done remarkably badly. He ered country-side, with the glowing said he, pointing to the marks of returns to the house, and you want to find out who he is. You come to a London house agent!" "What should I have done?" I cried,

with some heat. "Gone to the nearest public house. That is the center of country gossip. They would have told you every name, from the master to the country." from the master to the scullery maid. Williamson? It conveys nothing to my mind. If he is an elderly man he is not this active cyclist, who sprints not this active cyclist, who sprints away from that young lady's athletic pursuit. What have wegained by your expedition? The knowledge that the girl's story is true. I never doubted it. That there is a connection between the cyclist and the hall. I never doubted that, either. That the hall is tenanted by Williamson. Who's the better fo by Williamson. Who's the better for that? Well, well, my dear sir, don't look so depressed. We can do little more until next Saturday, and in the eantime I may make one or two incuiries myself."

Next morning, we had a note from Miss Smith, recounting shortly and accurately the very incidents which I had seen, but the pith of the letter lay in the prostscript: "I am sure that you will respect m

nce, Mr. Holmes, when I tell you that my place here has be difficult, owing to the fact that employer has proposed marriage I am convinced that his feelings are most deep and most honorable. At the same time, my promise is, of course, given. He took my refusal very seriously, but also very gently. You can understand, however, that the situation is a little strained."

"Our young friend seems to be get-ting into deep waters," said Holmes, thoughtfully, as he finished the let-ter. "The case certainly presents more features of interest and more possibility of development than I had originally thought. I should be none worse for a quiet, peaceful in the country, and I am inclined to run down this aftern test one or two theories which I hav

Holmes' quiet day in the country had a singular termination, for he arrived at Baker street late in the evening, with a cut lip and a discolored lump upon his forehead, besides a general air of dissipation which would have made his own person the fitting object of a Scotland Yard investigation. He was immensely tickled by his own adventures, and laughed heartily as he counted them.
"I get so little active exercise that

it is always a treat," said he. "You are aware that I have some proficiency Occasionally, it is of service; today, for example, I should have come to very ignominious grief without it."

curred.
"I found that country pub which I had already recommended to your notice, and there I made my discreet inquiries. I was in the bar, and a garrustaff of servants at the Hall. There is

The heath was covered with golden patches of flowering gorse, gleaming magnificently in the light of the bright spring sunshine. Behind one of these clumps I took up my position, so as to command both the gateway of the hall and a long stretch of the road upon either side. It had been deserted when I left it, but now I saw a cyclist riding down it from the opposite direction to that in which I had come. He was clad in a dark suit, and I saw that he had a black beard. On reaching the end of Charlington grounds, he sprang from his machine and led iey by name, who was always there. We had got as far as this, when who should walk in but the gentleman him-self, who had been drinking his beer in the tap-room and had heard the whole conversation. Who was I? What did I want? What did I mean by asking ion. Who was I? What did What did I mean by asking questions? He had a fine flow of lan guage, and his adjectives were very vigorous. He ended a string of abuse by a vicious back-hander, failed to entirely avoid. The next few minutes were delicious. It was a straight left against a slogging ruf fian. I emerged as you see me. Mr. Woodley went home in a cart. So ended my country trip, and it must be con-fessed that, however enjoyable, my day on the Surrey border has not been much more profitable than your own."
The Thursday brought us another

> "You will not be surprised. Mr. Holmes," said she, "to hear that I am leaving Mr. Carruthers' employment. Even the high pay cannot reconcile me to the discomforts of my situation. On Saturday I come up to town, and I do not intend to return. Mr. Carruthers has got a trap, and so the dangers of the lonely road, if there ever were any dangers, are now over. 'As to the special cause of my leav-

letter from our client.

ing, it is not merely the strained situation with Mr. Carruthers, but it is the reappearance of that odious man, Mr. Woodley. He was always hideous, but he looks more awful than ever now, for he appears to have had an accident, for he appears to have had an accident, when he is much disfigured. I saw him the looks more awful than ever now, for he appears to have had an accident, when he is much disfigured. I saw him the looks after turning the horse, after turning the horse, and the looks are turning the horse. for he appears to have had an accident, for he appears to have had an accident, and he is much disfigured. I saw him out of the window, but I am glad to say I did not meet him. He had a long talk with Mr. Carruthers, who seemed much excited afterwards. Mr. Woodley must be staying in the neighborhood was opened up. I grasped Holmes' Woodley must be staying in the neighborhood, for he did not sleep here, and yet I caught a glimpse of him again this morning, slinking about in the shrubbery. I would sooner have a sav-age wild animal loose about the place. I loathe and fear him more than I can say. How can Mr. Carruthers endure such a creature for a moment? However, all my troubles will be over on

So I trust, Watson, so I trust," said Holmes gravely. "There is some deep intrigue going on round that little woman, and it is our duty to see that no one molests her upon that last journey. I think, Watson, that we must spare time to run down together on Saturday morning, and make sure that this curious and inclusive investigation has no untoward ending."

confess that I had not up to nov taken a very serious view of the case, which had seemed to me rather gro-tesque and bizarre than dangerous. That a man should lie in wait and fol-Mr. Sherlock Holmes listened with attention to the long report which I heard-of thing, and if he has so little was able to present to him that evenwas able to present to him that even-ing, but it did not elicit that word of curt praise which I had hoped for, and should have valued. On the contrary, very different person, but, except on one occasion, he had not molested our things that I had done and the things that I had not.

"Your hiding place, my dear Watson, was very faulty. You should have been behind the hedge, then you would have had a close view of this interesting person. As it is, you were revolver into his pocket, before leaving our rooms which impressed me with the feeling that tragedy might prove to lurk behind this curious train

The heath was covered with golden | some rumor that he is or has been a clumps of flowering gorse, seemed all | eral feet upon the muddy path. "Halclumps of flowering gorse, seemed all the more beautiful to eyes which were weary of the duns and drabs and slate-grays of London. Holmes and I walked along the broad, sandy road inhaling the fresh morning air, and rejoicing in the music of the birds and the fresh breath of the spring. From a rise of the road on the shoulder of Crooksbury hill, we could see the grim Hall bristing out from amidst the an"That's Peter, the groom," cried the Hall bristing out from amidst the ancient oaks, which, old as they were, were still younger than the building which they surrounded. Holmes pointed down the long tract of road which wound, a reddish yellow band, between the brown of the health and the budding green of the woods. Far away, a black dot, we could see a vehicle mov ing in our direction. Holmes gave an exclamation of impatience.

exclamation of impatience.
"I have given a margin of half an hour," said he. "If that is her trap, she must be making for the earlier train. I fear, Watson, that she will be past Charlington before we can possi-

rise, we could no longer see the vehicle, but we hastened onwards at such a pace that my sedentary life began to tell upon me, and I was compelled to fall behind. Holmes, however, was always in training, for he had inexhaus-tible stores of nervous energy upon which to draw. His springy step never slowed until suddenly, when he was a hundred yards in front of me, he halt-ed, and I saw him throw up his hand with a gesture of grief and despair. At the same instant an empty dog-cart, the horse cantering, the reins trailing,

'That's the man!" I gasped

A solitary cyclist was coming toward us. His heard was down and his shoulders rounded, as he put every ounce of energy that he possessed on to the pedals. He was flying like a racer. Suddenly he raised his bearded face, saw us close to him and pulled up. saw us close to him, and pulled up, springing from his machine. That coal-black beard was in singular contrast to the pallor of his face, and his eyes were as bright as if he had a fever. He stared at us and at the dogcart. Then a look of amazement came "Hallao! Stop there!" he shouted,

holding his bicycle to block our road. "Where did you get that dog-cart? Pull up, man!" he yelled, drawing a pistol from his side pocket. "Pull up, I say, or, by George, I'll put a bullet into your horse."

Holmes threw the reins into my lap, and sprang down from the cart. "You're the man we want to see. Where is Miss Violet Smith?" ne said, in his quick, clear way.
"That's what I'm asking you. You're

in her dog-cart. You ought to know where she is."
"We met the dog-cart on the road.

parson. Come, man, come, if you really are her friend. Stand by me and we'll save her, if I have to leave my

carcase in Charlington Wood.' He ran distractedly, his pistol in his hand, towards a gap in the hedge. Holmes followed him, and I, leaving the horse grazing beside the road, followed Holmes.

This is where they came through.

"That's Peter, the groom," cried the stranger. "He drove her. The beasts have pulled him off and clubbed him. Let him lie; we can't do him any good, but we may save her from the worst fate that can befall a woman." We ran frantically down the path which wound among the trees. Whad reached the shrubbery which sur

rounded the house when Holmes pulled "They didn't go to the house. Here are their marks on the left—here, be-side the laurel bushes. Ah! I said so." As he spoke, a woman's shrill scream

-a scream which vibrated with a fren-zy of horror-burst from the thick green clump of bushes in front of us From the instant that we passed the It ended suddenly on its highest note with a choke and a gurgle. "This way! This way! They are in the bowling alley," cried the stranger, darting through the bushes. "Ah, the cowardly dogs! Follow me, gentlemen! Too late! too late! by the living Jingo!"

We had broken suddenly into a lovely glade of greensward surrounded by ancient trees. On the farther side of it. under the shadow of a mighty oak there stood a singular group of three people. One was a woman, our client drooping and faint, a handkerchiel round her mouth. Opposite her stood appeared round the curve of the road and rattled swiftly towards us.

"Too late, Watson, too late!" cried Holmes, as I ran panting to his side.

"Fool that I was, not to allow for that earlier train! It's abduction, Watson—abduction! Heaven knows to the attitude suggestive of the road and rattled swiftly towards us.

"Too late, Watson, too late!" cried tached young man, his gaitered legs parted wide, one arm akim bo, the other waving a riding-crop, his whole attitude suggestive of "Fool that I was, not to allow for that earlier train! It's abduction, Watson—abduction! Murder! Heaven knows what! Block the road! Stop the horse! That's right. Now, jump in, and let us see if I can repair the consequences of my own blunder."

The state way of the content of wedding service, for he pocketed his prayer-book as we appeared, and slapped the sinister bridegroom upon the back in jovial congratulation

"They're married!" I gasped. "Come on!" cried our guide; "come n!" He rushed across the glade, Holmes and I at his heels. As we approached the lady staggered against the trunk of the tree for support. Williamson, the ex-clergyman, bowed to us with mock politeness, and the bully. Woodley, advanced with a shout of brutal and exultant laughter.

"You can take your beard off, Bob," said he. "I know you, right enough. Well, you and your pals have just come in time for me to be able to in-

troduce you to Mrs. Woodley."
Our guide's answer was a singular
one. He snatched off the dark beard which had disguised him and threw it on the ground, disclosing a long, sal-low, clean-shaven face below it. Then he raised his revolver and covered the young ruffian, who was advancing upon him with his dangerous riding-

upon nim with its dangerous raing-crop swinging in his hand.

"Yes," said our ally, "I am Bob Car-ruthers, and I'll see this woman righted, if I have to swing for it. I told you what I'd do if you molested her, and, by the Lord! I'll be as good

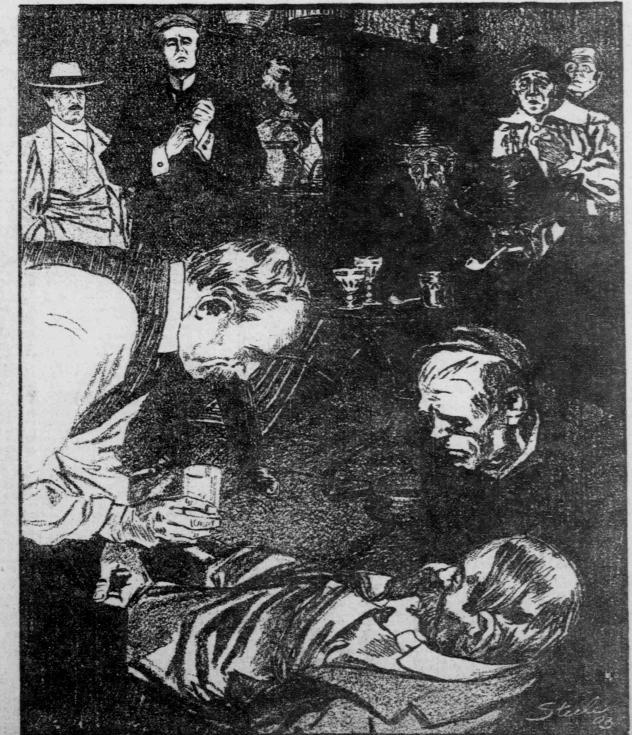
You're too late. She's my wife."
No, she's your widow." No, she's your widow.

His revolver cracked, and I saw the blood spurt from the front of Woodleys waistcoat. He spun round with a scream and fell upon his back, his hideous red face turning suddenly to a dreadful mottled pailor. The old man, still clad in his surplice, burst

into such a string of foul oaths as I have never heard, and pulled out a revolver of his own, but, before he could raise it, he was looking down the barrel of Holmes' weapon.
"Enough of this, said my friend, coldly. "Drop that pistol! Watson,

pick it up! Hold it to his head! Thank you. You, Carruthers, give me that revolver. We'll have no more violence.

(Continued on Page 2, Section 3.)



"It was a Straight Left Against a Slogging Ruffian."